

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Jewish People's Institute

AND/OR COMMON

Julius Hess School

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

3500 W. Douglas Boulevard

-- NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN

Chicago

-- VICINITY OF

STATE

Illinois

CODE

12

COUNTY

Cook

CODE

031

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES, RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES, UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

City of Chicago (Board of Education)

STREET &amp; NUMBER

228 N. LaSalle Street

CITY, TOWN

Chicago

-- VICINITY OF

STATE

IL

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Cook County Building

STREET &amp; NUMBER

118 N. Clark Street

CITY, TOWN

Chicago, Illinois

STATE

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Illinois Historic Sites Survey' (Historic Structures)

DATE

April 1975

-- FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Historic Sites Division, Dept. of Conservation

CITY, TOWN

405 E. Washington, Springfield

STATE

IL

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The 150' by 190' lot, situated on the northwest corner of Douglas Boulevard, is almost completely covered by the orange brick structure. From the start the function of the building was seen as distinctively urban, in contrast to the earlier settlement at Taylor and Lytle Streets, a former convent. The predecessor building was situated on a park-like site.

The 1927 J.P.I. building is three stories in height, set upon a high limestone basement. The main formal entrance on Douglas Boulevard, south facade, is made up of three two story arches; within the two story arcade are located three double doors, originally copper though only the classical details of dentils and pediments survive. The arched windows above the doors contain the Star of David. Other religious symbols have been incorporated into the Moorish style capitals of the columns in the arches. The secondary entrance, on St. Louis Avenue, is also limestone though the design is simpler. The primary purpose of the latter entrance is separation of crowds entering the athletic facilities and auditorium which are located in the north portion of the building.

The fenestration pattern on the second and third stories is joined by a series of rounded arches. The spandrels between these floors are of copper and decorated in a simple abstract pattern. The capitals from which the arches spring are, like those on the first floor, decorated in a flat curvilinear pattern containing religious motifs.

The parapet is ornamental with glazed polychrome terra cotta tile, medallions of abstract design and ornamental brickwork. A portion of the east parapet has been rebuilt in a cream colored brick. Behind the parapet, on the fourth level, is located the outdoor dancing pavilion/theatre, promenade and three classrooms.

The floor plan of the building reveals its various functions; unhappily a fire which occurred in the lobby area in the late 1960s has destroyed the ornamental work on the ceiling and the frescoes. The building contains an 800 seat auditorium, swimming pool, locker and shower rooms, library, kitchen and dining room, laboratories, a lecture hall, and various classrooms. The 1955 adaptive-use by the Chicago Board of Education seems to be successful and complete.

**8 SIGNIFICANCE***out*

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES **1927**

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Grunsfeld &amp; Klaber

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The architectural design of the Jewish People's Institute building is distinguished more for its adaptability and utility than by the name of the architectural firm of Grunsfeld and Klaber. Shortly after construction the building was reported to be one of the largest and most complete of its type in the world. The architects benefited from the practical knowledge of the staff of the Institute, as those men and women were able to clearly set goals and requirements for the design. This settlement house is distinguished, in particular, for its completeness in utility and adaptability within the confines of an urban site.

The primary significance of The Jewish People's Institute building lies in the area of social/humanitarian activity. The charter of The Chicago Hebrew Institute, predecessor to the J.P.I., states the following goal:

"...The promotion of education, civic training, moral and physical culture, the amelioration of the condition and social advancement of the Jewish resident...and of maintaining and conducting for that purpose schools, libraries, laboratories, reading classes and club rooms, gymnasium(s), music and lecture halls..."

To this goal the J.P.I. organization and building served as many as 1,287,916 people in the year 1933.

The Chicago Hebrew Institute was incorporated in 1903 as a not-for-profit social service organization. Prior to this, the first attempt to organize a Jewish community center in Chicago was in 1892 when a group of wealthy Jews met at Hull House with Jane Addams to organize the short-lived Maxwell Street Center. The founding of the Chicago Hebrew Institute was prompted by concern of the established German-Jewish community for the large population of Russian Jews arriving in the United States due to the pogroms of persecution undertaken in Russia in the last two decades of the 19th century. The Jewish community center movement is unique in the history of the United States; no such institution existed in the Old World. The intent of this particular community center was to meet the desires and aspirations of a people transplanted in a new environment; the emphasis was put upon education and adjustment of the individual, while maintaining the basic values of Judaism.

The educational opportunities available through the J.P.I. were always extensive but the most important education offered was to the newly arrived immigrant. The J.P.I. was oftentimes the first institutional contact made in the New World. Courses were offered in English and citizenship; the J.P.I. maintained a Naturalization Bureau for those qualified for citizenship. Services offered for the newly arrived and the existing community included classes in music and art, athletic facilities and the Herzliah Hebrew School (one of the first year-round schools of its

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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type). Classes offered to the community at large were: dancing, athletics, dramatics, domestic science; the evening school granted accredited courses and degrees in grade and high school for those earning a living for their families during the day. Prompted by the closing of the city's Crane Junior College, the J.P.I. opened the fully accredited People's Junior College during the Depression. Classes were open to the general public for the modest sum of \$50 per semester.

Facilities of the J.P.I. building included game rooms, a swimming pool, a theatre, a restaurant and barber shop. The roof garden, designed as an open air theatre and social area, served as a playground for the school and as a recreational (summer) school for children aged four to twelve.

Backers and alumni of the Jewish People's Institute:

Kate Levy, M.D.: professional medicine at Northwestern University and teacher at J.P.I.  
Julius Rosenwald: of Sears, Roebuck & Company and early financial backer.  
Theodore Regensteiner: of the Regensteiner Press.  
Maurice Goldblatt: merchant  
Jacob M. Arvey: politician  
Philip L. Seman: lawyer and director of J.P.I., 1913-1945  
Maurice L. Rothchild: merchant  
Abraham Lincoln Marovitz: attorney  
Leo Rosten: author and former teacher at J.P.I.

The Jewish People's Institute was designed in 1926 and completed in 1927; the architects were Grunsfeld and Klaber.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Kraft, Louis. The Development of The Jewish Community Center. New York: National Association of Jewish Center Workers

Meiks, Hyman L. History of The Jews of Chicago. Chicago: Jewish Historical Society, 1924.  
 Seman, Philip M. Jewish People's Institute (Annual) Reports 1921-1925. (Bound and on file at Chicago Historical Society.)

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				O			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property is 150' x 190' and is located in D. Goodwin Sub of NW $\frac{1}{2}$  of NE $\frac{1}{2}$  of sections 23, 39, & 13, block 5, lots 48, 47, 46, 45, and part of 44.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Margaret G. Kershaw

ORGANIZATION

for Jewish Community Centers of Chicago

DATE

July, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

1 South Franklin

TELEPHONE

346-6700

CITY OR TOWN

Chicago

STATE

IL

**12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER